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Racism and Sexual Oppression in Anglo-America: A Genealogy

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A GENEALOGY

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INTRODUCTION

TWO GREAT DANGERS

In the early morning hours of Monday, October 12, 1998, a twenty-one-year-old university student named Matthew Shepard died in an intensive care unit in Fort Collins, Colorado, six days after having been kidnapped, pistol-whipped, bound to a fence post, and abandoned in the freezing darkness a few miles outside Laramie, Wyoming. His murderers, Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney, both also twenty-one years old, had encountered Shepard on the evening of October 6 at the Fireside Bar, a popular student hangout in Laramie. The two locals struck up a conversation with Shepard, whom they knew to be gay, by posing as homosexual themselves. They eventually convinced him to follow them outside to McKinney's pickup truck so they could go someplace more private to continue their conversation. Once their intended victim agreed to the plan and the three drove away from the bar, however, McKinney revealed their real intention, which was to humiliate Shepard because of his homosexuality and in the process to beat and rob him. McKinney prefaced the assault by announcing, "Guess what? We're not gay. You're going to get jacked. It's gay awareness week."[1]

The beating began inside the truck while en route. Once outside of town, McKinney and Henderson pushed Shepard out of the truck at gunpoint and then tied him to a split rail fence. For some time they continued to kick him and beat him with the butt of a stolen .357 magnum. He suffered a total of eighteen blows to the head, some of them hard enough to crush portions of his skull, severe bruising from repeated kicks to the groin, and numerous blows to the limbs and body. At some point early on, McKinney considered forcing Shepard to strip naked, but in the end he only took his size seven black leather shoes, which police later found in the truck bed. The two men also

took Shepard's wallet and spent the rest of that night enjoying their booty: twenty dollars cash.

Late the next afternoon a young cyclist discovered Shepard, still tied to the fence with arms outstretched like a scarecrow and covered with blood. He was alive, but barely breathing. The cyclist immediately contacted the county sheriff's office, and a deputy was dispatched to the scene. Because of Shepard's unusually small stature—five-foot-two, 105 pounds—the sheriff's deputy at first reported that she was giving emergency first aid to a critically injured thirteen-year-old boy. Only later did authorities identify Shepard as an adult. His head and face were so disfigured that family members summoned to the hospital to confirm his identity could hardly recognize him.

Like most queer Americans and many non-queer ones as well, I followed the grim news regarding Shepard's condition and prognosis closely, day by day, for nearly a week. Every few hours, Rulon Stacey, head of Poudre Valley Health Systems, issued updates to the press. Stacey reported that because of severe damage to the brain stem, which controls heartbeat and breathing among other vital functions, doctors were unable to regulate Shepard's body temperature, which fluctuated from 98 to 106 degrees. His condition deteriorated steadily. It was clear to me by the final day that, given the extent of his injuries, his death was a blessing, if anything can be said to be a blessing in the aftermath of such outrageous cruelty.

I was on sabbatical that October, holed up alone in a little farmhouse in the Appalachian Mountains fifteen miles east of State College, Pennsylvania, polishing a manuscript on the work of Michel Foucault to be published the following year and wondering what I should write about next. My only interaction with other human beings through that long, sad autumn day was via email, but I was attached to the Penn State University LGBT listserv, so there was a *lot* of email. Most of the postings were from gay undergraduates expressing a newfound fear of walking alone at night or striking up a conversation with a stranger. Although I could not tell from their user names, I guessed that those who seemed most profoundly shaken were male, white, and very young. The rest of us had and have such fears, of course, but it didn't take Shepard's murder to instill them in us.

My own feelings on that day were just a grim heaviness, sorrow for a young man and a family and circle of friends whom I had never met, and an old familiar anger that manifested itself mainly in the

repeated phrase, "How many times? How many times does this have to happen?" After all, what was done to Matthew Shepard, gruesome as it was, was nothing especially remarkable. It was certainly not the first time somebody had killed a queer, and it would not by any stretch of the imagination be the last.[2]

In fact, the Anti-Violence Project of New York estimates that on average about fifty Americans are murdered every year because their assailants believe they are homosexual or judge their behavior or appearance to be in violation of gender norms. About 60 percent of those murders are characterized by what the AVP terms "forensic overkill," meaning brutality far beyond what was necessary to end the victim's life (Brandt 1999, 4). Excessive brutality is a hallmark of hate crimes; such crimes are not just perpetrated against particular individuals the attackers want dead but against an entire group of people they want eradicated. If the AVP's estimate is even close to accurate, it is likely that by mid-life every nonheterosexual person has heard about scores, if not hundreds, of fatal and near-fatal attacks, many of which involved severe brutality and torture.[3] As far as I could see, the only remarkable aspect of the Shepard case was the fact that the media publicized it so energetically.

But I had little hope that media involvement, even if it persisted, would be sufficient to convince the public that assaults on and threats against homosexuals are important enough to do something about. First, the very fact that the Shepard murder got so much attention made it seem that deadly violence against gay men, lesbians, and transgendered people is extremely rare in our society. As Jean Baudrillard famously observed about Watergate, scandals often work to conceal the scandalous nature of everyday life. Singling out the Shepard murder for exclusive coverage actually worked to obscure the dozens of similar murders and thousands of nonlethal assaults against queer people in the United States in the same year. And with those other acts of violence eclipsed, it could be easy for many people to decide that there really is no problem, no general climate of homophobia, no reason for queer people to be afraid or to demand civic protection and support. And second, even before Shepard was dead, some people were insisting that Shepard himself, not his attackers and not our homophobic society, was responsible for his injuries. According to Bill McKinney and Kristin Price (Aaron McKinney's father and girlfriend), McKinney and Henderson crushed Shepard's skull and

genitals and left him for dead only because he made a pass at one of them, not because they harbored any hatred toward homosexuals. Other commentators stopped short of accusing Shepard of sexual predation but did maintain that through carelessness and indiscretion he was responsible for his fate.[4] "He shouldn't have been so open about his sexuality. He shouldn't have been willing to leave a bar with strangers. He shouldn't have touched Aaron McKinney. People who do things like that deserve what they get." How many times do we have to hear people blame the victims of murder, queer-bashing, or rape? "She was asking for it." "He brought it on himself." "What do you expect?"

What indeed?

In the thirty-six hours or so following Shepard's death, a few Penn State students managed to put together plans for a candlelight vigil and announce the particulars on the listserv. That Tuesday evening, October 13, I got myself together, drove into town in the spitting rain, parked my car on Beaver Avenue, and walked a couple of blocks to the designated meeting place on West College. By 7:30 a small group had gathered at the Allen Street bus stop outside the old university gate. There were about thirty people in all. Most of them, like most of the population of State College, Pennsylvania, were white and very young. To my eye they all looked pale, scared, and vulnerable. One very enterprising young woman somehow got the crowd's attention and tried to say a few words appropriate to the occasion, but it was hard to hear her over the roar of buses and the blare of car horns. There was no microphone. Then a young man spoke, passionately but equally inaudibly. The rain came down a little harder. I looked around at those assembled. It was a miserable gathering, pathetic, hardly a show of community and strength in the face of adversity. Very soon people ran out of things to say or got tired of shouting over the traffic. The young woman who had opened the proceedings felt the need for some sort of closure, so she sang a show tune that was meant to be uplifting; but despite her beautiful voice, it didn't seem to do the job. The group fell silent.

Then somebody said, "Sing 'We Shall Overcome.'"

"I don't know the words," she said. A rippled murmur spread through the crowd. "Does anybody know the words to 'We Shall Overcome'? Can somebody start it?"

I was a bit taken aback; I don't remember a time *before* I knew the words to "We Shall Overcome." Its lyrics and melody were impressed upon my infant brain long before I could read, right along with "Jesus Loves Me" and "Rock-a-Bye Baby." In my childhood in the 1960s the rolling tones of "We Shall Overcome" were practically one with the atmosphere. During those few long moments standing there on West College Avenue in the relentless rain, the words of that song ran like rushing water through my head: "We'll walk hand in hand. . . . We are not afraid." They came to me with the clarity and beauty and power of Mahalia Jackson's voice, reverberating across thirty-five years of my life. I looked at two round-faced lesbians clasping hands in front of me, a pale tint of fear on their nineteen-year-old cheeks. Those words in that context, in the shadow of Matthew Shepard's horrific murder, meant as much to me as they ever had in any other place at any other time. I suddenly felt very old. Was it possible that nobody in that gathering besides me knew that song?

I don't have a good voice, but I can carry a tune, especially when I have license to choose my own key. I could have started the song, and then maybe through their unified voices, for just a few minutes, that frightened, wet, dejected little knot of people would have become something like a community united and supporting each other in a time of crisis. It is, after all, a very powerful song.

I could have. But I didn't. The moment passed. The gathering disintegrated without closure. Each one of us wandered away, carrying with us, not a sense that despite the violence and injustice all around us life can go on and love and respect do still exist—which is, I suppose what the candlelight shining in the darkness at such vigils is intended to instill in us—but rather with that sense of futility and hopelessness that drizzle and senseless death inspire.

As I drove through the profound rural darkness back to the solitude of my rented farmhouse with tears running down my cheeks, I asked myself: Why did I not do it? Why did I not do the one thing that might have salvaged that pitiful event? It wasn't modesty. In a crowd of strangers who would never see me again, I certainly wasn't too shy. But I could not bring myself to do it. I could not because, regardless of all the similarities between the death of Matthew Shepard and the death of, say, Emmett Till, I could not bring myself to take a song that to me meant hope in the face of white racism and use it to express

hope in the face of heterosexist violence. I could not assimilate the two—the two forms of oppression, the two resistance movements, the two hopes. Trying to do so felt dangerous and wrong.

There were similarities, though, not only in the oppressions and the movements but even some very striking similarities in those two horrific murders, in spite of the differences that forty-three years inevitably make in human life in general and the obviously important difference in the race of the two victims. In the years since I stood on that street corner and did not sing, I have pondered those similarities at some length.

I don't remember the Till murder, which happened a few years before I was born. But contemporary accounts, like the news stories about Matthew Shepard, are vivid. In August of 1955, fourteen-year-old Emmett Louis Till, known to his family as Bobo, traveled from his home in Chicago down to the Mississippi Delta to spend some time with his uncle and aunt, Mose and Elizabeth Wright, and his country cousins. Four days after his arrival, on Wednesday evening, August 24, Till and several of his teenaged relatives drove into Money, Mississippi, and joined about a dozen other black teenagers who were chatting and playing checkers on the porch of the white-owned general store.[5] By most accounts, young Till was eager to impress his cousins and their friends. He bragged that back home he had a white girlfriend, a classmate whose picture he showed the other boys. They were skeptical. According to Till's cousin Curtis Jones, "one of the local boys" dared Till to prove himself: "Hey, there's a white girl in that store there. I bet you won't go in there and talk to her."[6] With his adolescent peers looking on, Till took the dare. He went inside the store where Carolyn Bryant, the twenty-one-year-old wife of the absent store owner Roy Bryant, was minding the counter.

Exactly what happened inside the store is a matter of dispute. According to Carolyn Bryant in her testimony at her husband's trial, Till asked for two pennies' worth of bubble gum. Then, when she handed it to him, he took her hand, squeezed it, and asked her for a date. She jerked away and tried to exit between the two front counters, but Till stepped forward and addressed her a second time.[7]

It is likely that Till was not as fresh as Bryant depicted him in court, but he did say or do something that upset her enough to cause her to leave the cash register unattended and head for a pistol she knew was concealed outside in her sister-in-law's car. Realizing that

things had gone much too far, one of Till's cousins grabbed him and ushered him quickly toward the pickup truck. As Bryant fumbled with the pistol, Till, apparently still intent on impressing his young peers and insensitive to the danger he was placing all of them in, let out his now-famous wolf whistle, and the teens drove out of town.

Three nights later, Roy Bryant and his half brother J. W. "Big" Milam drove to the Wright home and demanded that Mose Wright relinquish his nephew. Mrs. Wright offered the men money to leave the boy alone, but they refused it and told her to go back to bed. They roused Till and ordered him to get dressed. When the boy failed to address Milam as "sir," Milam threatened to shoot him. In the darkness it was not clear to the occupants of the house exactly how many people were outside, but Mose Wright testified in court that one other man, probably "a colored man," was on the porch and that he heard a lighter voice, possibly a woman's voice, outside in the yard just before Bryant and Milam threw Till in the back of their pickup truck and drove away.[8]

Wright said later that he did not believe the men planned to kill Till, just discipline him; and indeed, after their trial was over Bryant and Milam told reporter William Bradford Huie that their original intention was only to scare the boy.[9] Milam, as an overseer on his brother's farm, prided himself on his ability to supervise and command the obedience of black men. It seems likely that he believed he could break Till and make the city boy behave like the field hands that answered to him at the farm.[10]

Milam and Bryant described to Huie how their plans changed through the course of the night. At first they drove around looking for a particular bluff that Milam knew. Once there, they intended to whip Till with Milam's army-issue .45 caliber pistol and then make him believe they were going to throw him in the river. In the moonless night, however, they couldn't find the place. Finally, so they told Huie, they gave up, drove back to Milam's house, and pistol-whipped Till in the tool shed.[11] The hundred-and-sixty-pound Till didn't scare easily, however. Milam said the boy bragged to him and Bryant about his sexual exploits with white women and showed them the picture of his white girlfriend. At that point they decided to kill him. They put him back in the bed of Milam's truck, picked up an old gin fan behind their brother's store in Itta Bena, and headed for the river. Around daybreak on Sunday, August 28, they stopped at the banks

of the Tallahatchie and ordered Till to unload the fan and take off all his clothes. Milam asked him again whether he thought he was as good as a white man and whether he really had had sexual encounters with white women. Naked and at gunpoint, the boy didn't flinch and replied to both questions in the affirmative, whereupon Milam shot him through the head. He and Bryant then barb-wired Till's lifeless body to the gin fan and threw it into the Tallahatchie. Huie quotes Milam: "I didn't intend to kill the nigger when we went and got him—just whip him and chase him back up there [to Chicago]. But what the hell! He showed me the white gal's picture! Bragged o' what he'd done to her! I counted pictures o' three white gals in his pocketbook before I burned it. What else could I do? No use lettin' him get no bigger!"

What really happened between the time when Milam and Bryant abducted Till from the Wright home and when they threw his body in the Tallahatchie is still very much in dispute. A great deal of evidence suggests that the beating occurred not in Milam's tool shed but in his brother Leslie's barn in Sunflower County. If Till actually died at the barn, the trial should have been held in Sunflower County, which might have made a difference in the outcome. There is good reason to believe that law enforcement officials in Tallahatchie County manipulated the trial and suppressed evidence, actions they might not have had the power to take elsewhere but that may have been necessary to secure the not-guilty verdict and perhaps also to protect accomplices. So there is some reason to think that, in order to shield those who had obstructed justice on their behalf, Milam and Bryant lied to Huie about where the murder occurred. However, it is also possible that even if Till was tortured in Sunflower County he did not die there. Witnesses at Leslie Milam's farm said they saw a body removed from the barn that morning and placed in Milam's pickup. A tarp was thrown over the body. But according to at least one witness, there was movement under the tarp.[12] It is conceivable, then, that even though Milam and Bryant omitted the beating in the Sunflower County barn from their story to Huie, they still told the truth about where the fatal bullet was fired. It is even possible that Till was conscious enough to respond to Milam's questions at that point and that, knowing he was about to die, he refused to give Bryant and Milam the satisfaction they would have obtained if he had debased himself and denied his manhood.

Although some of the facts are in dispute, there are numerous echoes of the Till killing in Matthew Shepard's murder. In both cases two young men took it upon themselves to teach another young man a lesson; their apparent intent was to discipline and punish, to terrorize, and thereby to force submission. Both pairs of men employed the same means—late night abduction and pistol-whipping. Both victims were from out of town, arguably unfamiliar with the finer points of local mores, whereas the assailants were natives to the region where the murders occurred. Both cases received unprecedented media attention. Both victims' mothers actively promoted public awareness of the pervasive bigotry and systematic injustice of which their sons' brutal murders were emblematic. But the greatest similarity is that both Matthew Shepard and Emmett Till refused to hide or apologize for their sexuality; on the contrary, they affirmed and asserted it publicly. How important are these parallels? What do they indicate?

"It's not the same; it's not the same," a Binghamton University graduate student had said repeatedly to me and a white friend over lunch five years before Matthew Shepard was killed. In the aftermath of the 1993 March on Washington, we were discussing the fact that gay and lesbian activists often draw on the symbols and rhetoric of the black civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The Binghamton student was African American and gay, and he was insistent that white gay and lesbian people, like my friend and me, must be ever mindful of the differences between antiblack racism and heterosexism. Even when there are parallels, he said, the differences are still enormous, and it is a mistake as well as an insult to all African Americans ever to forget them. I took his point very seriously. Even though I have since learned that "We Shall Overcome" was sung by American labor unionists of all races long before the Montgomery Bus Boycott or the Greensboro lunch counter sit-ins, I still take his point very seriously. In part because of that conversation in the spring of 1993, I didn't sing on that autumn evening in 1998.

I didn't sing because I believed it was important for Matthew Shepard to remain Matthew Shepard and Emmett Till to remain Emmett Till, two separate individuals whose living and dying are different events in human history. I believed it was important to remember the differences between black and queer struggles, subcultures, and experiences of oppression.[13] I believed it was important to insist on the details that distinguish the networks of power that shape the

histories of those struggles, subcultures, and oppressions. I still believe those things.

But I wanted to sing that night. I wanted to sing that song. I wanted to feel the power of the kind of solidarity and hope that song can evoke and to experience its infusion into that frightened and beleaguered little group. Did I do the right thing in refusing the temptation to call upon the memory and power of African American movements for justice and freedom in an effort to further the rights and interests, or at least comfort the fearful souls of nonheterosexual people? Years have passed. I'm still not sure.

I do know that laxity about differences between social movements, histories, and bigotries is dangerous. Significant details get erased. Genealogies get distorted, their power to enable resistance gets diminished, and their resources for creative change get locked away. When we conflate all gestures of resistance, when all of history gets reduced to a tale of all us good guys versus all them bad guys, everybody loses, because we all lose ourselves. The differences are what we have to hold onto; the differences are the source of possibility and strength. Like my lunch companion from Binghamton that afternoon so many years ago, we must insist on these all-important differences.

We—we philosophers and theorists, and our students and readers —can and often do talk about all this in the abstract. We cite great thinkers like Luce Irigaray or Gilles Deleuze or Jacques Derrida. But in countless moments like that one at the bus stop on West College Avenue in 1998, a person acts this way or that way. And those countless little acts shape the world. I made a world-shaping decision that night. Did I make the right one? What should I have done? What should one do?

My dilemma was, and is, this: There are not one but two great dangers. On the one hand there is the danger of identification, homogenization, and consequent erasure. By seeing all oppressions as the same, we can lose sight of the particular reality of our own situation as well as alienate potential allies for whom the differences are crucial. It was at least in part my acute awareness of this danger that stopped me from singing that night. But there is an other hand: There is also the danger of isolation, impotence, and collapse. If we maintain radical distinctions between political events, we may fail to see important overarching patterns and as a result miss opportunities to form and consol-

idate alliances that might counter the networks of power that oppress so many of us. We can speak of this philosophically as a question of the value of Sameness versus the value of Difference. Metaphorically, we can speak of the twin dangers of Scylla or Charybdis. But when it comes down to action, *ethically and politically,* how do we negotiate this passage?

For longer than I can remember, I have believed the greater danger was Sameness, the reduction of ultimately dissimilar things, people, and histories to one; that is probably why I am a poststructuralist thinker rather than a Hegelian dialectician or a Platonist. Not only have I witnessed the erasure of significant concerns when theorists and activists assimilated heterogeneous events and individuals to one analysis and program (for example, the virtual erasure of heterosexism and women's oppression in much Marxist analysis of class struggle), but I have also been impressed with the power of analyses that point out historical differences (for example, Michel Foucault's genealogy of sexuality) and thus offer renewed hope that the future, too, can be different from the present state of things.

But there is that other danger. And it is that other danger that caused and still causes me to question my decision not to sing on that October night. It is that other danger that has pressed me to explore the similarities between racist and heterosexist violence over the last several years, to see whether, despite all the differences in experience and effect, it might not be the case that somehow these things are joined together, part of the same matrix of power, employing the same means, serving the same aims, shaping the same lives. It is that other danger and that other set of possibilities that have moved me to write this book, despite the risks such an enquiry inevitably runs.

When I began this work in 1998, I believed that I was going to write a book about the ways in which racism and racist violence in the United States have influenced the development of sexuality, taking sexuality to be a *dispositif,* as Michel Foucault maintains in his *History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (that is, taking sexuality to be a network of power and knowledge that generates sexual identities and sexual subjects). I imagined that I would offer a description of race as a similar sort of *dispositif* or network of power and knowledge, one that produces racial identities and racial subjects, and that I would show how these two analogous networks of power intersect, and in many ways reinforce and at some specifiable times determine, each

other's configurations and functions. I thought I would take the tools Foucault develops in his genealogical research and apply them to an area he did not explore in any depth. I did not want to write another book about Foucault but to write a Foucaultian analysis, a genealogy of race to place alongside his (and my own) genealogies of sexual normalization.

Looking back at that set of ambitions and hopes, I am embarrassed at how little I actually knew in 1998. Although I certainly was aware of Foucault's scattered comments about race in the fifth part of *The History of Sexuality,* I was unfamiliar with his far more systematic and extended investigation of race in his 1976 lectures at the Collège de France. I was utterly ignorant of vast reaches of U.S. and British colonial history that are crucial for understanding anything about race in this society in the present day. And I knew virtually nothing about the international eugenics movement, let alone its roots in the United States—despite the fact that I had lived and worked for six years in Kirksville, Missouri, where hospital and university buildings bear the family name of Harry Laughlin, director of the U.S. Eugenic Records Office from 1914 to 1939, and where Laughlin's papers are housed.[14] As I did the genealogical work on race and racism that informs chapters 2 through 6 of this volume, my vision of what this book would be underwent extensive and for a while virtually perpetual transformation.

The only aspect of the project that did not change throughout those years was my conviction that racism in twentieth-century Anglo-America had to be understood in light of Foucault's work on normalization. The white race, I knew, was and is viewed by most people—white or not and consciously or not—as the normal race, and all other races were and are viewed as deviant with respect to it. Racism plays out, then, as a crusade against deviance, against the threat posed by abnormality or pathology. And at times in U.S. history—particularly in the last third of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first—the institutions that further that crusade have been able to persist in their allegedly healthful pursuits without even avowing that their targets are races. I believed that if I could show that this was so, then I should also be able to show how heterosexism connects with racism. After all, the *dispositif de sexualité* is heteronormative. Like racism, heterosexism plays out as a crusade against deviance, against the threat posed by abnormality

or pathology. So, I reasoned, two such similarly structured systems of normalization, coexisting in time and space, must inevitably share similar techniques for the production of normalized subjectivities and disciplined bodies. It was impossible that the two systems would *not* coalesce at important points. It was a matter of finding those points and articulating them.

I had Foucault's genealogy of sexuality before me, and I had explored it in depth in numerous seminars and articles and in *Bodies and Pleasures,* my 1999 book. If the development of race followed a trajectory similar to the one Foucault traces for sexuality in *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1,* I thought, it must have undergone a major transformation and expansion in the late nineteenth century with the emergence of what Foucault there calls "biopower," the confluence of disciplinary normalization and population management in vast networks of production and social control. Biopower transcends and to some extent negates sovereign power (power as traditionally conceived) and the discourses that rely and elaborate upon it. Its aim is to produce and intensify and direct vital forces rather than to limit and coerce what already exists. It was easy to see that race would be a useful tool in biopolitical practices, a tool for dividing and regulating populations and for frightening (or enticing) individuals into disciplinary conformity. But there was an important difference between race and sexuality with regard to the emergence of biopower: Foucault had shown (to my satisfaction at least) that sexuality—as a concept, a basis for personal identity, a region of scientific investigation—simply did not exist much prior to the nineteenth century. But clearly, race did. In the United States before the end of the eighteenth century and even earlier in the Anglo-American colonies, there were white people and black people and red and even a few yellow people, people who understood themselves and others to be members of races and to be essentially different from one another because of their racial identities. Race, unlike sexuality, could not have been an invention of biopower, even if it had been appropriated and reshaped in the nineteenth century to become biopower's tool.

So what *was* race, historically speaking? Where had it come from? How did it become available for biopolitical transformation and use? And when this appropriation and reshaping occurred, what relationships were created between race and sexuality? How did those relationships evolve as the biopolitical structures, institutions,

and discourses that fostered and connected them evolved? I began my inquiry with the nineteenth century, but I soon found I had to go back further. How far back only became apparent to me when I read Foucault's 1976 lectures, *"Society Must Be Defended,"* where he traces what he calls "race war discourse" back to the Puritans in early seventeenth-century England.

Although I was interested in racism and heterosexism in the United States, I found Foucault's study of race war discourse and racism in Europe extremely suggestive. Race first meant lineage or tradition, Foucault notes, not physical appearance. But then, somehow, it had changed to become a biological phenomenon. I believed that by tracing how that change in meaning had occurred I might discover the mechanisms I was looking for and the ways in which sexuality and race had become linked and had begun to operate in similar, if not in exactly the same, ways. The material I gathered along these lines forms the substance of chapters 2 and 3 and then in turn the basis for chapter 4, where I investigate nineteenth- and early twentieth-century discourses of sexual predation, and for chapter 5, where I examine eugenics, the effort to improve the human race through selective breeding and the scientific management of sexualized populations. That work led me to the material that forms chapter 6, where I sketch out how the U.S. eugenics movement reformed itself in the aftermath of Nazism to become the pro-family movement, a movement that is still in evidence today and very much at the forefront of antifeminist and antigay politics, although it seldom avows its eugenic history and racial investments.

Through this process I came to see that my initial assumptions were not quite on the mark. Race was not merely analogous to sexuality as a *dispositif;* in fact, the two are utterly inseparable. It is simply impossible to understand racism in the United States without some understanding of how sexuality functions to normalize individuals and regulate populations. It is impossible to understand sexism or heterosexism in the United States without some understanding of how race functions to humanize and dehumanize individuals and to produce and reproduce populations. But race and sexuality are not merely mutually influential. They are historically codependent and mutually determinative. Approaching them separately therefore insures that we will miss their most important features.[15] Yet that is

just what most people do—even some of the most sophisticated and thoughtful of theorists. Most feminists don't see racism as a crucial aspect of sexism (even though they may well believe racism is wrong and should be opposed[16]); likewise, most gay men, lesbians, and many transgender activists don't see racism as a crucial aspect of heterosexism and gender oppression; and most people of color, as well as most white antiracists, don't see sexism or heterosexism as crucial aspects of racism.[17] The result is that even the most dedicated, persistent, and well-intentioned activists not only fail to bring about the changes they seek but in many instances actually help perpetuate the very oppression and injustice they devote themselves to fighting.

I must make it clear that am *not* asserting that sex and race and sexual orientation "intersect," a claim that feminist theorists have been making for several years now. The metaphor of intersection does not begin to capture the complexity of the power relations brought to light here. Intersectional analyses tend to focus analytic attention primarily on identities rather than on institutions, discourses, and disciplinary regimes; but even when they do venture beyond accounts of identity construction, they still implicitly assume that racism, sexism, and heterosexism could and do operate sometimes in isolation from one another. My contention here is that in the twentieth century they do not.

Nor am I making the sweeping metaphysical assertion that we cannot end one form of injustice or oppression without ending them all. This is not a book about injustice or oppression in general; it is a book about racism and heterosexism in the United States. My claims are therefore historically specific: First, race and sexuality are essential organizing forces within specifiable, historically constituted networks of power, networks to which Foucault attached the name *biopower;* biopower would be impossible without them. Second, just as biopower requires race and sexuality, race and sexuality require biopower. They could not function apart from it, nor could they function apart from each other. And third, we will never understand how either race or sexuality operates, much less organize successfully to end the oppressive conditions and relationships that they underwrite, unless we examine them together.

As my project evolved through eight years of research, this book's purpose came to be to show what the world looks like when our cus-

tomary assumptions of separateness are left aside, and racism, sexism, and heterosexism are approached and analyzed simultaneously. The picture that emerges is startling in both its familiarity and its lack thereof. I offer it in the hope that a different way of seeing might afford different ways of resisting, critiquing, and challenging the oppressions and injustices that plague us.